



Saguaro National Park (West)

December Naturalist Program Schedule

Programs meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center, 2700 N. Kinney Road, and last 30 to 45 minutes, unless noted otherwise. All programs are subject to change. Call the visitor center at (520) 733-5158 for updates the day of the program. Program listings can also be found at www.nps.gov/sagu.

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 10:15 a.m. Play Sonoran Desert Bingo! Game: 30 minutes

Learn about the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert while enjoying a rousing version of Bingo! Get five in a row – down, across, or diagonally – and win a non-monetary prize. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 7, 21 10:15 a.m. Mountain Lions: Beyond the Myth Talk: 45 minutes

Envision a puma stalking its prey, then uncover the true nature of this elusive but essential predator. Misunderstood, maligned, and nearly eradicated by settlers, the cougar remains threatened by human encroachment. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 3:15 p.m. Lizards are Hot, Lizards are Cool Talk: 30 minutes

Lizards are small denizens of the desert that are a critical component of our desert community. Find out what it means when they do pushups or exhibit other odd behaviors. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 3:15 p.m. Kangaroo Rat: Super Survivor Talk: 45 minutes

Learn about the remarkable behavioral and physical adaptations these rodents possess that allow them to survive harsh desert environments. Find out how this nocturnal animal escapes predators, evades heat, and endures aridity. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 13, 27 3:15 p.m. Meet the Cuckoo of the Desert: The Roadrunner Talk: 30 minutes

The Greater Roadrunner is a popular and charismatic member of the desert community. Learn about the natural history, behaviors, and other facts about this colorful creature. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 6, 20 3:15 p.m. How Do They Do It? Walk: 15 minutes, 100 yards

Discover how the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert have adapted to the harsh conditions of this unique environment. (This program also is offered in Spanish Dec. 6, 20 at 12:15 p.m.) *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 1, 5, 13, 19, 26 2:15 p.m. Javelinas: Our Desert Neighbors Talk: 30 minutes

Sometimes referred to as the “desert pig,” the javelina is not a pig at all. Learn about this intriguing creature and how it survives in this arid environment. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 11:15 a.m. Living With Giants Talk: 45 minutes

The saguaro celebrates events and faces challenges throughout its life. A biologist explains how it provides shelter and substance for wildlife; when it flowers; its growth patterns; and how it fights for survival against drought, lightning, frost, and other dangers. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 20, 27 2:15 p.m. Creepy Crawlers: The Silent Majority Talk: 30 minutes

Learn about some of our most feared and misunderstood arthropods who call this park home. Come discover how essential they are for our desert community and why we shouldn't fear these mostly harmless creatures. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 11 3:15 p.m. Homesteading Adventures Talk: 30 minutes

The Hispanic women from homesteading families in the Tucson area left records of their adventures, and a ranger reads some of these fascinating first-person accounts. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 4, 10, 11 10:15 a.m. A Desert Trio: Snakes, Tortoises, and Monsters Talk: 30 minutes

Snakes, desert tortoises, and Gila monsters-- oh, my! This desert trio couldn't be more different, but yet they have a few things in common, such as being fascinating but misunderstood. Come learn about their communication skills, special adaptations, and defense systems. A bit of folk lore is also shared. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 12, 26 10:15 a.m. Desert “Pigs” Talk: 40 minutes

As the book title says, “Don't Call Me Pig”; but there is a resemblance between pigs and peccaries, also called javelinas. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 5, 19 10:15 a.m. Coyotes: God's Dog Talk: 30 minutes

You never know who or what you'll meet in the desert, including coyotes. Learn fact, myth, and fiction about these interesting desert inhabitants. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 13 10:15 a.m. Become a Flower Detective *Talk: 30 minutes*

Dec. 3, 4, 17, 18, 31 11:15 a.m.

Flowers can be seen almost any time of the year, if you know where to find them. Join us to discover these hidden floral beauties at Saguaro National Park. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Daytime Walks

Dec. 5, 19 9:45 a.m. Bird Walk *30 minutes plus optional additional 30 minutes, ½ mile*

Join us for a 30-minute walk in the sandy wash behind the Visitor Center to see what birds live among the cacti and shrubs. Learn how they find food, water and shelter. Participants interested in more will drive 2 miles to Sus Picnic area with its rocky canyon and hills for another 30-minute walk to see what wrens, hawks and other birds live there. The walk is on sand and dirt roads. No reservations required. All ages are invited.

Dec. 3, 10, 24, 31 9:45 a.m. The Plants Tell All *Hike: 2 hours, 1½ miles*

Plants are the foundation of the web of life. Join a park naturalist to learn the secrets of what ties the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert together. Plant survival, insects and spiders, birds and mammals -- nothing is off limits for discussion on this discovery trek through the desert. For this moderate walk, closed-toed shoes, a hat, and water are required.

Dec. 6, 20 10:15 a.m. Adaptations: Recipe for Survival *Easy 100-yard walk: 30 minutes*

Take a walk in our Cactus Garden to discover some physical and behavioral adaptations of desert plants.

Dec. 6, 20 11:15 a.m. Life Cycle of the Saguaro: Seed to Giant *Walk: 45 minutes, 100 yards*

Hear some astonishing reasons about why so few Saguaro seeds make it to fruition.

Dec. 14, 28 10:15 a.m. Sonoran Secrets to Desert Survival *Talk & Walk: 60 minutes, 200 yards*

Take a short stroll and identify the most common hazards hidden in the desert, uncover survival strategies of native plants and animals, and acquire practical tips to ensure your safety, particularly in warmer temperatures. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Dec. 2, 5, 7, 12, 13, 16, 23, 26, 27, 28 11:15 a.m. Spiny, Shady, and COOL! *Walk: 30 minutes, 100 yards*

Come for a short walk and discover the great variety of cacti that inhabit this unique and fascinating desert.

Dec. 8, 15, 22, 29 2:15 p.m. Synergy in the Desert: The Sonoran Habitat *Talk and Walk: 45 minutes*

For all of life, "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" is true. The iconic Saguaro is the focal point for a discussion of how the parts of the Sonoran Desert work together to create a rich living desert that is unique in the world.

Dec. 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, 23, 30 2:15 p.m. Desert Jigsaw Puzzle *Walk: 45 minutes, 100 yards*

When competition and cooperation vie for attention in the Sonoran Desert, the result is an intricate, wondrous jigsaw puzzle of plants and animals. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Childrens Programs

Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28 10:00 a.m. Parents & Tots Walk *Guided Walk: 2 hours*

Bring your infant or toddler on this easy, ranger-guided walk as we explore the sights and sounds of the Sonoran Desert. Toddler backpacks are available for loan if you don't have your own. . **Reservations required; 733-5158**

Full Moon Programs

Dec. 9 1:45 p.m. Wasson Peak *Moonlight Hike: 7 hours, 8 miles roundtrip*

This hike climbs 1,700 feet to the highest point in the Tucson Mountains. Enjoy a 360-degree view of the sunset before descending by the light of the moon. The hike is at an easy-to-moderate pace but is considered difficult due to elevation gain and hiking after dark. Ages 12 and older. **Reservations required; 733-5158**

Dec. 10 3:45 p.m. Twilight Glow to Moon Shadows *Moonlight Hike: 3 hours, 2 ½ miles*

This walk bridges sunset into moonlight, letting hikers experience the desert in both the glow of twilight and the light of the waxing moon. The trail ascends a hill with a gentle, packed slope, and then descends a sandy wash. The hike is completed with a return on a dirt road. Ages 10 and older. **Reservations required: 733-5158.**

Dec. 13 6:00 p.m. Moonrise Over The Mountains *Patio program: 45 minutes*

Popular guitarist and singer-songwriter Mark William and Native American flute player Robert Hval will play music on the patio as visitors watch the full moon rise over the mountains. Bring a folding chair and blankets or coats. *All ages. Wheelchair accessible.*

No reservations necessary.

Spanish Language Programs

Dec. 6, 20 12:15 p.m. ¿Cómo Pueden Sobrevivir? *Walk: 15 minutes, 100 yards*

(Spanish version of How Do They Do It?) Charla en Español donde discutiremos como las plantas y animales del desierto Sonorense se han adaptado a través de los años para poder sobrevivir y florecer en nuestro único y duro ambiente. *Wheelchair accessible.*